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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEANFA/NRC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEHSI/ODC TBILISI GG PRIORITY

RUEHSI/USDAO TBILISI GG PRIORITY

RUEHUNV/UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY

RHMFIS/US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHMCSSU/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHMFIS/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 000275

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [DOE](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: NUCLEAR SMUGGLING UPS AND DOWNS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Kent Logsdon for reasons 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) Summary and Comment. Despite making great strides in combating nuclear smuggling, Georgia lacks a reliable system for effectively responding to incidents of nuclear and radioactive material detection. The Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration/Office of Second Line of Defense (SLD) conducted an international workshop in Tbilisi in January, which was an acknowledgment of Georgia's continued progress in this arena. The Georgians continue to show improvement in deterring the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive material. However, presentations during the workshop also highlighted some of Georgia's shortcomings. In particular, the Georgians need to develop an effective inter-agency concept of operations to respond to detection incidents. End summary and comment.

SLD WORKSHOP

12. (U) On January 20-22, the Office of Second Line of Defense conducted an international workshop in Tbilisi for the advancement of radiation detection and response to deter, detect and interdict the illicit movement of nuclear and other radioactive material. Participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, the European Commission, IAEA and the United States attended the workshop. Topics addressed during the workshop included training, equipment maintenance, radiation alarm response, opportunities for regional cooperation, and an overview by a representative from each country on their radiation detection program. As hosts of the conference, the Georgians were active participants and gave presentations on training curriculum, considerations related to alarms due to orphan sources, and national response plans. The Georgians also provided tours of two border crossing installations - Red Bridge and Sadakhlo. The presentations by the Georgians showed how committed they are to strengthening their ability to combat nuclear smuggling.

LACK OF EFFECTIVE RESPONSE PLAN

13. (C) The Georgians acknowledge, however, that they have work to do, which was highlighted in a story told by Archil Pavlenishvili, the Captain of Nuclear Smuggling Initiative, Special Operations Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA). He said that in mid-December, a gentleman called an MOIA contact, saying that he had an "inheritance" of radioactive material from his father that he wanted to dispose of. Officers from the MOIA met the gentleman outside of Tbilisi on a Friday afternoon and had him place the material, which was in a plastic bottle in his car, in a

local field. The current response procedure to the detection of radioactive material is to call one of two Nuclear and Radiation Safety Service (NRSS) staff on their personal cell phones. The fact that it was a Friday afternoon, coupled with the fact that there was no readily available "pig" (a container to safely store radioactive material), led to a delay of three to four hours from the time the authorities discovered the source to the time someone from NRSS arrived and safely contained it.

¶4. (C) The two NRSS employees who were "on-call" admitted that they missed calls regarding the detection of a source because they did not have their cell phones on them or because they were out of the country or otherwise unavailable. The lack of "pigs" has also been an ongoing problem in Georgia; they often do not have "pigs" available for large sources. Pavlenishvili has asked the U.S.G. for assistance in obtaining such containers and has also said that he would like Georgia to be able to produce them on their own, as their heavy weight could lead to issues with importation.

¶5. (C) The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and other U.S. agencies have strongly suggested that NRSS develop a procedure for how to respond to the detection of radioactive material (for example, have customs or patrol police call a dedicated 24/7 number at the Ministry or NRSS instead of specific individuals), and have offered their assistance in doing so. NRSS has stated that they are currently working on such a plan and will submit a draft to the NRC for review. The development and effective use of

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such a response plan would greatly strengthen Georgia's ability to combat nuclear smuggling. We will continue to track the development of the plan and provide assistance where appropriate.

LOGSDON